

THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

The married flirt is a plant which thrives only in the shadow of city walls.

Once let the married woman in a small town get herself "talked about" and her fate is settled at once.

In the large cities, however, all is different. The conduct which in the village wife would cause severe gossip and censure from observers passes without comment in town, or even excites admiration.

The country matron who drives out with her neighbor is liable to meet cold glances of her women acquaintances when next they meet; while the woman of fashion speeds by in her car, with her gallant besides her, whispering compliments in her ear, and society applauds.

While custom has much to do with our ideas of morals, there are certain principles which no custom or country can change—principles which form the dividing line between night and morning—between pleasure and license.

I believe a conception of these principles is being born in the soul of every human being. There is an instinct which prompts every woman to preserve her virtue, whether she obeys it or not, and there is an instinct called conscience, which whispers to every wife when she is overstepping the boundary line of discretion in conduct, no matter whether she dwells in country or city.

The married flirt can be classed in three divisions; the born flirt, the flirt made by circumstances or books, and the seemingly unconscious flirt.

The born flirt is a combination of selfishness, sensuousness and love of applause. She feels that the world owes her a "good thing" though the heavens are pulled down to produce it.

There is a thread of tender romance running through the book, the strong instinct of motherhood which makes the generous spinster heart yearn to pour out its repented affection on some abandoned child, some "doorstep baby" that she might make her own.

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The made flirt is a more sensitive, sentimental and vain being. She has read books—Ouida in particular—where in the married siren figured as heroine.

She feels that her husband does not fully understand her, and her vanity and idealism lead her to believe and construe as sympathy all the flattering speeches whispered in her ear, and to treasure all the notes and roses sent her by other men.

The seemingly unconscious married flirt is perhaps the most dangerous and certainly the most aggravating of all. She looks straight into the eyes of men with childlike trust, and seems not to understand their bold glances or their meaning compliments, but she does.

Perfect mistress of herself, absolutely free from making any mistake, secure in her husband's love and respect, and in public esteem, she yet teases and tempts the admiration of men to leap dangerously near the flame of love, by those dangerous arts of coquetry which are as indescribable as alluring.

He leaves her, convinced of her stainless purity and absolute innocence, and she tells her husband all about it, after

extracting a promise from him that he will do nothing rash, but let the matter drop right where it is. The husband is indignant at the man, and full of sympathy for his wife, whose seeming humiliation and grief touch him with renewed admiration and pride.

This type of married flirt seldom gets herself gossiped about, though she goes on with her innocent allurements to the end of life. She causes heartache and disappointment, but not absolute disaster and scandal. She takes the perfume from the rose of danger—she avoids the thorn; and whatever result comes of her actions she always receives the sympathy of the public and leaves the blame and censure for others to bear.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

LITERARY TOPICS.

"The Reveries of a Bachelor" are not more delightful reading than those dainty word pictures of spinsterhood, which have much of the enduring charm of Miss Mitford's or Mrs. Gaskell's sketches of village life.

Billy Edwards—Height and reach will whip Mitchell, but he has a good outside chance to overcome these advantages.

Jack Dempsey—Corbett will win in a hurry.

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Messrs Lee and Shepard are about to publish a new book by Henry Wood under the title of THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NATURAL LAW.

Mr. Wood has the faculty of rendering this unusually dry subject not only instructive but positively entertaining.

In a series of interviews with members of the last congress, thirty-one out of forty-three remarked that they were readers of the Youth's Companion.

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OPINIONS ON THE FIGHT

Chappie Moran—Mitchell will surprise the American.

Tom Allen—I will place my money on Mitchell.

Tom Kelly—It will not be a walk over for either.

Billy Clark—Mitchell will give Corbett the battle of his life.

Charley Daly—I incline to think that Corbett will get there, but Mitchell may treat us all to a surprise party.

Jim Cronin—I saw Corbett lick Sullivan and naturally I think pretty well of him. But they say Mitchell is harder than nails and a bad man to beat.

Jim Coughlin—I don't think either is going to have a cake walk.

Hugh McManus—It will be a hard fight and it will be hard work picking the winner.

Dave Gideon—Corbett, easily.

Billy Madden—Corbett ought to win.

Edward Mallahan—I have been a great admirer of Mitchell, though everybody appears to dislike his chances in this fight.

P. J. Donahue—Corbett may win, but he will have no picnic.

Billy Edwards—Height and reach will whip Mitchell, but he has a good outside chance to overcome these advantages.

J. B. McCormick—Mitchell, no matter how well trained hasn't a look-in.

Colonel Bill Harding—Charley will break the talent this time. I have never picked a loser, and its too late to begin now.

"Butch" Thompson—I'll have to bet on Corbett.

Al Smith—It's a pudding for the American.

Professor Mike Donovan—I don't think Corbett has the soft thing he expects.

Steve Brodie—Corbett will win if Mitchell doesn't land one of those punches with which he floored Sullivan.

Jack Dempsey—Corbett will win in a hurry.

Jack Cusack—Mitchell ought to win.

Jim Wakely—Corbett in a walk.

Ike Thompson—Mitchell.

"Snapper" Garrison—It's the hardest fight I ever heard of to pick a winner.

Warren Lewis—Mitchell will do well to stay two rounds.

Jerre Dunn—It looks like a good thing for Corbett, but it won't be. Mitchell will get the money.

"King" Kelly—I'm a red-hot Mitchell man.

W. A. Edwards—The greatest surprise of the century is in store for the sporting public. Mitchell will win in three rounds.

WHAT MITCHELL SAYS.

"I am not figuring to win in two or three rounds as Corbett is," said Mitchell the other day, "but from the way I feel at present it is safe for me to calculate that the American boxer will realize on January 26 that he has not been a participant in a cake walk.

"I do not advise any man to bet on me, because this fighting business is mighty uncertain; but should any friend of mine choose to risk a few dollars on my chances of landing the big prize he may rest assured of getting a run for this money.

"The more I think the job over the more I am convinced that I shall finish first or the very best second that ever was known."

"Do you look for a long fight?" was asked.

"That's a hard question to answer," Mitchell replied smilingly. "You see, it's this way. Corbett may take it into his head to be rude at the very outset. Of course, I should not think of doing so, but if he does set out at such work there is only one thing for me to do. In my opinion the fight will last more than two or three rounds. Just how much longer depends upon what opportunities are offered."

MONEY IN PRIZE FIGHTING.

Prize fighting is a better business just now than it used to be. At least it is now a more lucrative business to those directly interested than it was a few years ago.

They had reached that stage of the engagement where she felt free to amuse herself by exploring his pockets. It so happened that he had forgotten to take out the ticket for his watch, and when she found that she immediately wanted to know what it was.

'66, they fought for only \$500 a side and a champion belt that cost about one dollar and a half. When Tom Allen made his American debut in January, 1869, he did not get enough money out of his winnings to dust a fiddle, and when Charley Gallagher put Tom to sleep that same year Gallagher had no trouble at all in disposing of his winnings in a single night.

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"That," said he, with as much dignity as he could command, "is a souvenir of the World's Fair."

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